DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 332 260 EA 020 757

TITLE	Administrative Shortage in New England: The Evidence, the Causes, the Recommendations.
INSTITUTION	New England School Development Council, Sudbury, MA.
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	37p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publication Sales, New England School Development Council, 83 Boston Post Road, Sudbury, MA 01776 ($10.00 prepaid).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrative Policy; Administrator Education; *Administrator Role; Administrators; Administrator Selection; Educational Development; Elementary Secondary Education; *School Administration; School Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	*Administrator Supply and Demand; *New England

ABSTRACT

The shortage of administrators within New England and recommendations aimed at alleviating that shortage are documented. In late 1987, the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) Board of Directors conducted the first regional survey of the New England administrative shortage issue. Sixty individuals (current and retired superintendents, principals, department chairpersons and career development professionals at higher education institutions, as well as other educational administrators) were interviewed over a 2-month period. Ninety-seven percent reported that there was some problem in filling either superintendent or principal positions or both. Fifty-seven percent felt the problem was severe. The interviews also generated a list of 22 possible reasons for the administrator shortage. Concerns related to fiscal issues, role expectations, school board supply, and support received very strong responses as important factors in the shortage. Recommendations were developed at the seminar and are presented along with implementation steps. Appended are a table of survey factors ranked in descending order and a list of references. (SI)

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ADMINISTRATIVE SHORTAGE IN NEW ENGLAND:

The Evidence
The Causes
The Recommendations

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New England School Development Council

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New England School Development Council
83 Boston Post Road • Sudbury, Massachusetts 01776

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PREFACE

The New England School Development Council Board of Directors responded in late 1987 to a growing body of documented and anecdotal evidence that indicated a decline in the size and quality of the administrative applicant pool in New England. Concerned about the implications of this phenomenon, NESDEC has attempted to explore the issue in a systematic way. The meaning and nature of the shortage, the factors identified as contributing to the shortage and the recommendations for alleviating it are reported herein. While NESDEC does not claim that the study speaks for all administrators in New England, valuable insights and greater understanding can be gained from the responses of those individuals who chose to share their opinions, beliefs and comments.

NESDEC wishes to acknowledge and thank the many contributors to this effort. The participants included those interviewed, the respondents to the survey instrument, and in particular those who prepared for and took part in the symposium aimed at generating solutions to the shortage. Each of the NESDEC staff has contributed in some way to this effort but two people deserve special acknowledgement. Carmen Burrows Goodman crafted the symposium findings into recommendations. Linda L. Galton undertook and successfully completed the enormous task of documenting and explaining the shortage. This involved the interview phase as well as the design, administration and analysis of the field survey of NESDEC-affiliated school districts. To all of the above we are grateful and recognize that without them this report would not have been possible.

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Executive Director, NESDEC
October, 1988

NESDEC Administrative Study
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I

THE EVIDENCE

The issue of administrator supply and demand is a complex one. When approached on the basis of numbers of certificated residents per state, which for the purposes of this study is construed to mean qualified, the supply of superintendents and principals in general appears more than adequate to meet current and future demand. Recent studies in Maine, Massachusetts and Connecticut indicate more than ample numbers of certificated individuals.

However, there has been mounting evidence — and with that evidence a growing concern — that, despite such healthy *numbers*, New England may indeed be facing a shortage of administrators. In fact, if judged on the basis of one such indicator of shortage, a reduced pool of applicants for administrative openings, many school districts have already experienced a reduction. For instance, numerous articles in local newspapers throughout New England have documented the sometimes dramatic decrease in the number of applicants for administrative positions. When this decrease in the size of the applicant pool is coupled with a perceived decline in the **quality** of the available applicants, even more districts are affected. NESDEC sought to examine these disparate pieces of information by conducting the first regional survey of the administrative shortage issue.

Interviews With Sixty New England Educators

To establish whether educators who have direct knowledge of administrative hiring procedures have perceived a decline in the number and/or quality of applicants, sixty individuals were interviewed over a two-month period. The interview group consisted of current and retired superintendents, principals, department chairpersons and career development professionals at higher education institutions, heads of professional education associations, representatives of state departments of education, and heads of superintendent search organizations. They were polled for their views on degree and type of shortage, asked to cite evidence for their beliefs, and invited to relate what they believed to be contributing factors.

The results of the interviews confirmed the widespread belief that there was a decrease in the number and quality of applicants for public school administrative positions.

Results of the interviews indicated that problems existed. An overwhelming number of respondents, 97%, reported that there was some problem in filling either superintendent or principal positions or both; 57% rated the problem severe. The interviews also generated a list of 22 possible reasons for the problem, based on the beliefs and experiences of the interviewees.

Sampling NESDEC - Affiliated School Districts

To test the interview results on a larger population, a one-page questionnaire was mailed to 288 NESDEC-affiliated district superintendents. The survey queried those superintendents on the existence of a shortage and if so, its degree and type. The questionnaire also listed the 22 possible causes volunteered by initial interviewees and asked respondents not only to check all factors they thought contributed to the problem, but also to rank from 1-10 those factors they believed to be of greatest significance. The survey also encouraged superintendents to include additional causes for the shortage, if any, and to make other comments pertinent to the issue.

The return rate for the questionnaire was 35%, with 101 of a possible 288 surveys returned. While it can be argued that the responding population is self-selected — that only those who believed there was a shortage took the time to respond — there are a number of important observations to be made from the data collected. Results of the questionnaire follow.

WHAT NEW ENGLAND SUPERINTENDENTS SAY

HOW REAL IS THE SHORTAGE?

- Fully 92% of respondents believed that there was some degree of shortage, with the greatest number clustered in the moderate range. Several of the individuals who indicated a moderate shortage qualified their choice with the comment that while they viewed the current shortage as one of moderate proportions, they believed the problem would rapidly become severe if not addressed immediately.
- 21% of the superintendents believed the problem was currently severe.
- 8% did not believe that a shortage existed.

NUMBERS OR QUALITY?

- Very few superintendents believed that the shortage was solely one of

numbers. The largest group, 44%, indicated the shortage was the result of both decreasing numbers of applicants and a decline in the quality of the existing pool.

- A slightly lower 42% felt that the shortage was solely one of high caliber applicants.
- Only 6% of the respondents who believed there was a shortage indicated that it was one of numbers of applicants only.

SUPERINTENDENTS OR PRINCIPALS?

- A solid majority of respondents, 75%, felt there was a shortage of applicants for both the superintendency and the principalship.
- Of the remaining respondents, 17% felt the shortage was primarily one of superintendents, while 4% believed it was one of principals only.

Since superintendents are the responding group for this questionnaire and they have primary responsibility for hiring principals, they would have direct knowledge of the characteristics of the existing pool of applicants. It appears that superintendents not only view themselves as an endangered species, but principals as well.

The results of the NESDEC study clearly demonstrate that contrary to national and state *evidence* of more than enough certificated individuals to fill administrative vacancies, New England educators believe there is a real problem finding adequate numbers of quality applicants. They were quick to volunteer what they believe to be the contributing factors to such a shortage, and were also very willing to illustrate their beliefs. The next section elaborates on both the issues and the stories that were reported.

II
THE CAUSES

Certainly the statistics just reported indicate there is a generally high level of respondent concern in both the interviews and the survey about declining numbers and decreasing quality of the administrative applicant pool. Similarly, survey respondents demonstrated almost 100% agreement with those interviewed regarding the factors which they believed affect the applicant pool. Table 1 lists the factors and their respondent ratings according to the central themes or issues that emerged from the interviews and subsequent survey.

Organizing and discussing the items according to these several broad themes makes a powerful statement for the issues that superintendents feel most directly affect the number and quality of potential administrative applicants. Concerns related to **FISCAL ISSUES, ROLE EXPECTATIONS, SCHOOL BOARD, SUPPLY**, and **SUPPORT** all received very strong response as important factors in the shortage. The only factor to receive minor support in the survey was the quality of district advertising.

It is important to recognize that, while most issues were very well supported, ranking of the individual factors **within** the issues varied, at times significantly. A task for future study might be to more closely examine what weight respondents gave each of the factors within the issues to gain a more subtle understanding of the complex nature of the problem.

Fiscal Issues

• **Salary**

Of all of the possible causes for the shortage that appeared on the questionnaire, responding superintendents were most vocal about the salary issue. The salary factor includes not only actual dollars paid for services rendered but also salary differential issues among teachers, principals and superintendents. A third element to be considered is the issue related to the concept of comparable worth, or superintendent salaries as they compare to those individuals with comparable responsibilities in other fields, such as chief executive officers in the corporate world.

PORTRAIT OF A SUPERINTENDENT

A composite portrait of how survey respondents view the public school administrative role at present can be constructed from an examination of the issues as they are grouped in Table 1. According to the respondents, it is a role to which one or more of these characteristics may apply:

- *A low salary for the level of responsibility and the demands of the job;*
- *A decreased salary differential among superintendents, principals and teachers;*
- *Too many seemingly unresolvable conflicts, coupled with comparatively few well-defined parameters;*
- *A multiplicity of boards demanding increased administrative and personal time and energies;*
- *Few incentives beyond salary either for taking a new post or for performing well in a current position;*
- *Prohibitively high housing costs in some communities, making residence there unaffordable for prospective candidates;*
- *A lack of community support for administrative efforts and school issues or a marked apathy towards them;*
- *A sense of professional isolation for both beginning and experienced administrators in the face of comparatively few formally established support and networking groups.*

The comments that accompanied the salary issue were often embedded in a litany of additional concerns. However, several respondents addressed the salary issue directly: "It's a hard, demanding and complicated job — not comparably compensated or rewarded" . . . "Superintendent salaries in Boston suburbs should be comparable to New York-Chicago suburbs, around $95,000 to more than $100,000" . . . "The job doesn't pay enough for services demanded" . . "Administrative work year and administrative per diem are different from the considerations usually addressed under salary issues" . . ."I think the expectations that communities have developed for the superintendent are so awesome, and the salary for hours worked is so low that good people do not entertain the thought to prepare for administration."

Many superintendents felt that a lot more could be done to build non-salary incentives into employment packages. Cars and/or car allowances, annuities, paid moving expenses, housing or a housing allowance, and fully paid medical and dental benefits were all suggested as attractive employment incentives.

Several superintendents pointed out that the financial incentives for moving *up* to the principalship and/or superintendency are no longer there. When the superintendent's salary is low or financial incentives for

TABLE 1

	% Who Cited the Factor	% Who Ranked the Factor 1-10	% Who Ranked Factor 1-2-3 1=most important
FISCAL ISSUES			
Salary	83%	79%	54%
Poor performance incentives	61%	56%	20%
High housing costs	52%	47%	13%
Low district budgets	38%	32%	10%
ROLE EXPECTATIONS ISSUES			
High level of aggravation	74%	69%	32%
Lack of job satisfaction	55%	50%	25%
SCHOOL BOARD ISSUES			
Large number of school boards	67%	62%	22%
Difficulties with school boards	48%	43%	11%
SUPPLY ISSUES			
Administrator retirement coupled with lower teacher interest	51%	45%	12%
Lack of geographic mobility	47%	44%	17%
Lack of women applicants	33%	28%	5%
Early retirement	24%	19%	5%
Lack of internal promotion mechanisms	23%	20%	4%
Poor applicant job-seeking skills	6%	6%	2%
SUPPORT ISSUES			
Lack of community support	47%	44%	7%
Inadequate professional support system	44%	41%	10%
Inadequate central office staff	44%	38%	8%
TRAINING ISSUES			
Poor management skills	27%	26%	6%
Ineffective pre-service preparation	19%	18%	8%
REGIONAL/NATIONAL COOPERATION ISSUES			
Non-transferrable retirement system	30%	26%	2%
Problems with certification	25%	21%	1%
PUBLIC RELATIONS ISSUES			
Ineffective district advertising	4%	2%	0%

the superintendent are missing, salaries for other administrators are also depressed. Raising superintendent salaries would have a corresponding positive affect on salaries of other administrators. Since the logical level for teachers to enter administration is at the position of assistant principal or principal, an increase in salaries at that level can make the positions more attractive to teachers, thus serving an administrative recruiting function that is currently absent.

• Performance Incentives

In addition and related to salary, the need for more rewards or perquisites to demonstrate board and community appreciation for outstanding service was mentioned by several respondents. Suggestions included *early tenure* or an early contract renewal offer, multi-year or rollover contracts, and sabbaticals either to pursue further study or to spend a semester as a visiting scholar in a university setting.

• High housing costs

Although the problem of high housing costs is particularly noticeable in Massachusetts and Connecticut, the whole New England area has been hit with a rapidly escalating housing market. Not only has interstate job mobility been affected but intrastate movement has also been hampered. Prohibitive housing costs effectively block people from accepting jobs — several respondents related examples of superintendents or principals who wanted to accept positions offered to them but, upon more closely exploring the housing market, were unable to afford relocation costs.

• Low district budgets

Survey respondents noted that it was difficult in some communities to get an adequate district education budget approved. A community history of resisting educational growth could have a marked effect on the characteristics of the administrative applicant pool in such instances. Several Massachusetts respondents mentioned Proposition 2 1/2 as an additional constraint.

Role Expectation Issues

• High level of aggravation

Superintendents in this survey were quite vocal regarding the level of job-related aggravation they experience and rated this factor as very important to the current shortage. They portrayed the position as one which increasingly had conflicting burdens and demands, coupled with high expectations and lack of ultimate control in areas like curriculum and budget.

One respondent described the position in terms of its "lightning rod effect" — that is, the superintendency attracts all the "static" and is expected by all constituencies to neutralize or diffuse it.

Several respondents observed that the superintendency is the only position without job security. Should the configuration of the school board change, the superintendent may be voted out simply because of style differences. Several respondents observed that it is difficult to make the educational changes that are expected when it is rare to have a contract that lasts more than three years.

Among the comments respondents made were, "The level of administrative influence has diminished over the years, while the demands upon administrators have increased. The treatment of some administrators may be a factor" . . . "There seems to be a general feeling that the *rewards* don't justify the *aggravation*. Consequently, many qualified people seem to be exploring other avenues". . . "Low pay, high aggravation, too much of the 'old boy' network in operation."

• Lack of job satisfaction

It is important to differentiate here between **lack of job satisfaction** and **high level aggravation** as factors. It is entirely possible that, while a role can contain many conflicting demands or aggravations, one can still enjoy one's work. Conversely, one can be dissatisfied with one's role or array of responsibilities and yet not feel that it carries an inordinate share of aggravation. The respondents apparently feel that the administrative role holds high levels of aggravation which are not tempered by satisfaction with one's work in general.

The superintendency requires the ability to be: a skilled financial analyst and budget builder; an intelligent and scholarly interpreter of educational issues; a shrewd political strategist; an effective consensus builder of community needs and goals; and an appealing sex symbol. These abilities are not often fully found in a single, ordinary, limited individual.

Basically, the respondents portrayed the administrative role as currently in flux. Seasoned superintendents and principals, often accustomed to more traditional top-down management, are responding to a call for teacher empowerment, bottom-up change, and building-level decision-making. This institutional change, coupled with what respondents variously describe as positions with *no boundaries* and as *peculiarly emotional*, make many administrators feel buried, not challenged. As one superintendent succinctly noted, "The job isn't *fun* anymore."

It is interesting that several respondents explicitly stated their frustrations with lack of time for family and personal matters. One respondent noted the particular difficulties of the role in terms of the two-career couple, when time together is brief and home responsibilities need to be shared.

School Board Issues

• Large number of school boards

It appears that the sheer numbers of school boards in some districts (at times 5, 9, or even 12) are a major deterrent for many potential applicants. The expectation of each of the boards is for a *fair share* of the superintendent's time in addition to regularly scheduled meetings with

each board. Often there is little joint activity among them, making the demands on the superintendent's time and energy even greater.

• Difficulties with school boards

Several superintendents observed that the role of school board member is no longer as attractive to citizens as it was in the past, often resulting in a less varied field of candidates. Respondents also mentioned an apparent increase in the number of members who campaign on a particular agenda and may play out those agendas at the expense of intra-board, board/superintendent, and board/community relations.

Several respondents suggested that orientation be required for new board members. While some superintendents and boards regularly conduct orientation, most districts and states appear not to have developed formalized programs. One respondent's wish list included "an up-front, clear distinction between the administrative responsibilities of the superintendent and the policy-setting function of the board."

Supply Issues

• Administrator retirement coupled with a lower number of new teachers entering administration

Several respondents expressed concern that teachers are no longer as interested in entering the ranks of administration and replacing those who retire as they had been in the past. Financial and prestige incentives are no longer enough to attract teachers to administration. For many, the tradeoffs aren't worth the longer hours and increased demands and the common perception that the superintendency is a *no win* job. Comments regarding this factor included: "Lack of pool from teacher ranks — teachers do not aspire to be administrators — poor job incentives and rewards compared to teaching" . . . and "I think the teachers should be surveyed — many of them are not being attracted to administrative positions — their career goals do not fit the job expectations of the administrative posts."

A recent report in Maine concluded: "You will note from the report that there is genuine cause for concern, i.e., the high percentage of superintendents who expect to retire (40.4%) or leave the superintendency for other employment (4.4%) within the next five years; and a replacement supply that may be illusory. The principal's position with a five-year projection of vacancies of 43.4% for secondary principals and 44.0% for elementary principals further underscores the committee's concern.

• Lack of geographic mobility

Often, people choose to stay in a particular geographic area and limit their work options based on that choice; at other times the choice is based less on positive reasons for wanting to remain in a location than for economic ones — some people cannot afford to move due to high housing and living expenses in some areas. Responding superintendents gave this

factor substantial weight in the survey, indicating that it is certainly of real concern when considering a new position.

• Lack of women applicants

According to data collected in late 1987 from chief state school officers and soon to be published by AASA's Office of Minority Affairs, nearly 30% of more than 113,039 school administrators for which data were available were women, a 4% increase over 1984-85. However, they occupied only a miniscule portion of the top jobs. With 39 states reporting data on women and the superintendency, only 3.7% (434 out of 11,331 superintendents) were women, an increase of only 1% over 1984-85. Many New England superintendents concurred with the national results and indicated low numbers of women not only in position but as applicants as well. Currently few programs or support systems in New England are exclusively devoted to supporting the efforts of women who aspire to be administrators.

• Early retirement

For the past few years there has been an informal documentation of the number of administrators who elect to take early retirement, but several more rigorous attempts to document this phenomenon have recently begun. For example, a recent Massachusetts LEAD Center report found that 40% of the 923 superintendents and principals they surveyed plan to stay in their present position for only 1-4 years; 30% plan to stay 5-9 years.

The same study reported that 50% of K-6 principals (aged 40-59) and 42% of superintendents (aged 40-59) expected to leave through retirement within 5 years. Thirty-six percent (36%) of grade 5-9 principals and 29% of grade 9-12 principals in the same age group also indicated they would retire within 5 years. Preliminary results did not distinguish between those retiring *on schedule* at age 65 or over and those choosing early retirement. However, the Maine study referred to earlier reported that out of 185 administrators who expect to retire in the next 5 years, only 12 are currently over 60 years of age.

• Lack of internal promotion mechanisms

An atmosphere for actively encouraging promising teachers to enter administration as well as steering talented principals toward central office positions or grooming assistant superintendents for superintendencies seems to be missing in a number of school districts. A substantial number of respondents indicated that this lack of nurturance was a contributing factor to a shortage of applicants.

- **Poor applicant job seeking skills**

A few respondents mentioned poor job search skills on the part of potential applicants as a possible reason why posted positions do not receive more applicants. Job seekers who are not aware of or who ignore some common sources for job advertisements, such as search firms, local, regional and national newspapers, as well as the informal administrative network, frequently miss existing opportunities.

Interestingly, several of those survey respondents who believed there was a dearth of **quality** applicants also pointed to poor job-search skills evidenced by the lack of professional polish in many resumes and cover letters. They noted that attention to these personal presentation tools is critical to being perceived as a high caliber applicant.

Support Issues

- **Lack of Community Support**

Several administrators in this survey felt that the community either doesn't understand or doesn't appreciate the demands of the administrative role. Sometimes, superintendents report, this lack of support is characterized by community apathy towards the school system. At other times, administrators view it as an active attempt by some members of the community to work against the educational or budgetary goals of the school system.

- **Inadequate professional support system**

Educational research has consistently characterized teaching as an isolating profession. Several administrators indicated that their own sense of professional isolation is rarely acknowleged, let alone attended to in a meaningful fashion. With nearly half of the survey respondents citing the professional support issue as a contributor to the shortage, it is apparent that many administrators desire more or better vehicles for sharing their concerns, issues and problems. They recognize that the lack of these supports may contribute to a corresponding lack of interest from potential in-house candidates.

- **Inadequate central office staff**

It would appear, given the broad parameters of the administrative role, that lack of adequate professional support staff played a critical role in how one rated job satisfaction and degree of aggravation inherent in one's work. It could also be linked to a feeling that the community, via the school board, is unwilling to provide appropriate support for its superintendent, given the level of responsibility the job entails.

Training Issues

• **Ineffective Pre-service Preparation**

A number of responding superintendents believed that the level of preparation offered by many universities for fulfilling administrative certification requirements was inadequate to meet the multiple demands of the job and contributed to a lack of quality applicants for administrative positions.

• **Poor Management Skills**

Several superintendents had participated in search and selection processes that involved simulation exercises for candidates for administrative positions. They concluded that a number of applicants they observed were lacking in basic management skills. One stated, "Some applicants lack the necessary skills for decision making, the ability to structure alternatives and the willingness to accept the responsibility/ consequences for the decision."

Regional/National Cooperation Issues

• **Problems with Certification**

Extensive and, at times, inflexible state requirements for administrative certification contribute to the shortage in at least four ways, according to responding superintendents. First, they limit the ability of out-of-state applicants to freely apply for positions in other states without first ensuring that their experience and training are acceptable in that state. Reciprocity is limited. Second, the sometimes inflexible arrangements surrounding paid or unpaid internship requirements may be difficult to combine with a current work schedule. Third, there may not be an alternate certification route for crediting relevant professional and coursework experiences. If not, many seasoned superintendents will decline to undertake additional training simply to work in a particular state. Fourth, testing requirements may create a problem in that test content may be inappropriate to the nature of the administrative role and/or testing schedules may be out of sequence with candidates' needs.

• **Non-transferrable retirement system**

Respondents noted the difficulty in moving between states due to the present pension systems; several supported a *portable* pension system to facilitate interstate job movement. States have recently become more sensitive to the ways in which the present pension systems effectively prevent interstate movement.

Public Relations Issues

- **Ineffective district advertising**

Very few superintendents indicated that poor advertising greatly influenced the applicant pool. However, some consideration should be given to it as a factor, especially in smaller or more remote districts. A Maine report found evidence that information about administrative openings was not being widely disseminated. It urged districts to extend their advertising area and become more aggressive advocates for their schools if they hoped to attract candidates from beyond the community and region.

III
THE RECOMMENDATIONS

After the perceived shortage had been confirmed and the contributing factors identified, NESDEC sponsored a symposium to develop recommendations for alleviating the shortage. Invitations were sent to nearly 30 leading educators representing institutions of higher education, search consultants, professional associations representing school boards and superintendents, practicing administrators, and state departments of education in the six New England states. On June 14, 1988, the symposium participants met in *role-specific* and in *mixed* groups to develop the recommendations that follow.

Fiscal Issues

Survey respondents addressed several aspects related to salary and compensation for superintendents and other administrators. These included salaries, fringe benefits, and performance incentives. They agreed that depressed salaries and other forms of compensation discourage not only prospective superintendents but middle level administrators as well, since low compensation at the top means even lower compensation at other levels. They also addressed the high cost of housing in many specific areas of New England and agreed that in recent years, the cost of housing has become a more significant factor in the decisions of administrative applicants.

SYMPOSIUM RECOMMENDATION: *THAT A major effort be undertaken to increase salaries for the position of superintendent of schools and that the concept of comprehensive compensation packages be developed and applied to that position.*

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

IMPLEMENTORS:

1. Develop state and regional data bases on compensation for superintendents, central office administrators, principals, and teachers as well as for comparable positions in other professions or segments of the work force.

NESDEC
Professional Associations
Search Consultants

Because all school district salaries are public information, it will be necessary to justify increases in ways that the community can understand. Meaningful comparisons could show how superintendents tend to be underpaid for the scope of responsibility and time their jobs demand. For example, they could be compared with CEOs in business and industry, measuring such factors as span of control, annual budget and total staff. Or they could be compared with other professionals such as physicians or attorneys. Per diem salary comparisons within the school district, or comparing the administrative salaries as a ratio to teaching salaries, could show how little monetary incentive is attached to moving to entry level administrative positions. Through newsletters or in listings of vacancy announcements, professional associations could focus attention on salary issues by ranking job vacancies by salary level.

Increased salaries in general as part of a broad financial package for superintendents would provide a compensation level commensurate with job responsibilities. In addition, it would allow the salaries at entry level positions, for example, assistant principals, to rise and thus attract more candidates to the administrative career ladder.

2. Encourage varied and creative compensation arrangements as well as permissive legislation as needed.

Professional Associations

Districts should develop a broader array of perquisites for administrators such as extended vacation and sick leave and/or remuneration, attractive insurance options, automobile for district and personal use, paid sabbaticals, professional development activities, conference or course tuition, annuities, and maximum salaries for retirement. By providing options in creating a total compensation package a school board is better able to attract and retain highly qualified administrators as well as satisfy the sometimes conflicting requirements of local fiscal realities.

In some states existing statutes may prohibit certain types of compensation arrangements. The potential benefits of changing these statutes should be highlighted and targeted efforts undertaken to bring about the needed legislative changes.

3. Offer higher salaries and attractive benefits during administrative searches.

Search Consultants
Professional Associations
School Boards

Advertized higher salaries at the time of a search accomplish several objectives. They contribute in attracting more highly qualified candidates and thus offer a school board a more desirable base for final selection. Also, they allow for public comparison of salaries among school districts and might provide the incentive as well as the rationale for some districts to offer a higher salary. Such advertisements may also

motivate potential school administrators by showing them the financial benefits of this particular career ladder.

Sometimes a salary first contemplated during a search is the same or below that paid to the outgoing administrator. In such cases the rationale for creating a higher salary as well as an attractive benefits package ought to be readily available for school boards. When provided with market information as well as supply and demand information, school board members can make decisions based on real cost-benefit comparisons. Given the high cost of housing, moving costs and reimbursement for housing purchase expenses such as title costs, mortgage origination fees, normal closing costs and attorney's fees should be considered.

4. Provide comparative information on salaries, benefits and negotiating protocol to current and aspiring administrators.

NESDEC
Search Consultants
Professional Associations

Prior to accepting a position, those who have been under district-wide contracts may not be aware of the negotiation potential or the range and forms of compensation. Those entering a state or the region from different geographic areas, as well as those who are renegotiating contracts would benefit from such information.

Role Expectations Issues

The survey results indicated that the role of the superintendent holds high levels of aggravation which are not tempered by satisfaction with one's work.

SYMPOSIUM RECOMMENDATION: *THAT New and evolving roles for Superintendents of Schools be defined and widely publicized.*

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

IMPLEMENTORS:

Professional Associations
State Departments of Education

1. Define roles of administrators through case studies of individuals and through surveys of target groups or representative samples.

While such a definition may not in itself reduce aggravation or lead to quick satisfaction, it may be a first step in a continuing process. Roles of administrators, particularly the superintendent, are changing. The public and sometimes school boards are unaware of the complexities of the job and the various training and skills needed for success. The relationships between administrative positions within the school system also require periodic redefinition. Such definitions will provide important information for those who are unaware, give evidence of a changing job or increasing

complexity for those who are aware and serve as a basis for informed discussion by those interested in creating a position more conducive to the exercise of educational leadership.

School Board Issues

Some respondents noted that they must work with many school boards, each wanting a share of the superintendent's time. Others commented that school board members rarely receive an effective orientation to the position to which they have been recently elected. Sometimes, newly elected members attempt to translate campaign rhetoric into school board policy. Particular attention needs to be paid to the relationship between the superintendent and the school board and their respective understanding and appreciation for each other's roles and responsibilities.

SYMPOSIUM RECOMMENDATION: *THAT Orientation and continuing training be accessible and strongly encouraged for school board members to receive information and skills commensurate with their statutory responsibilities.*

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

IMPLEMENTORS:

Professional Associations
NESDEC
State Departments of Education

1. Examine the feasibility of legislated or required orientation for newly elected board members.

Efforts are underway in some places to require or strongly encourage school board members to pursue intensive orientation programs. These programs should contribute to clarifying issues related to school board member responsibilities as well as to adjusting role expectations upon assuming an elected or appointed position. The programs should also provide school board members important state specific information and introduce them to colleagues from other school boards. Such efforts, if appropriately timed, could ease the entry into the new role and provide for earlier informed participation.

2. Develop opportunities for ongoing training for school boards in team building and group work.

Higher Education
NESDEC
Professional Associations
Superintendents in District
State Departments of Education
School Boards

Districts should allocate funding for school board training within the district or provide opportunities for board members to attend programs sponsored by professional and community organizations. Regional or state school board programs could update board members about roles, educational policy issues and team building. Such opportunities, while informing current board members, might raise the stature of board mem-

bership and thus encourage others of serious purpose to enter the elective process.

SYMPOSIUM RECOMMENDATION: *THAT School boards and superintendents take formal steps to become more efficient and accountable through increased sensitivity to their specific and respective role responsibilities.*

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

IMPLEMENTORS

Superintendents in District
Professional Associations
Higher Education
School Boards

1. Examine both current and alternative board meeting structures and operating procedures to determine the most effective and efficient use of board and superintendent time.

An innovative response is needed to reduce the time given to board meeting preparation, attendance and follow-up particularly for superintendents with more than one school board. In some communities, boards might move toward college or corporate models, meeting 3-4 times per year for 2-3 days to plan, decide policy and set guidelines for administrative staff. For instance, weekend policy retreats might not conflict with board members' work schedules. Boards would need to agree on governance and policy-setting roles. Special meetings could be called for formal appeals or other special business during the year. Agendas for board meetings should stay focused on educational improvement, with board members acting as a group, not as individuals. Superintendents and their school boards might develop more productive relationships through goal-focused training provided and monitored over time by outside consultants.

Supply Issues

It is obvious from available executive search data, professional association and school board reports as well as discussions with principals and superintendents that the interest among educators in seeking administrative positions has declined in recent years. A decrease in both quality and quantity of applicant pools, particularly women and minorities, has been noted. Other factors noted by survey respondents that contribute to this issue are early retirement and lack of geographic mobility.

SYMPOSIUM RECOMMENDATION: *THAT A detailed plan be developed to recruit promising professionals into educational administration, with particular emphasis on reaching additional women and minorities.*

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

IMPLEMENTORS:

1. Develop recruitment strategies, increase networks for applicants, and promote contact between aspirants and practitioners.

Superintendents in District
Professional Associations
Search Consultants
NESDEC
State Departments of Education

Recruitment plans to attract and encourage professionals to enter the field of educational administration are necessary at the local and state level. Administrators should encourage teachers to participate in administrative preparation experiences such as mentoring, coaching, and interning. State departments could provide subsidies for administrative interns. NESDEC could conduct Executive Search Program workshops in each New England state to provide insights on the search process to more aspiring administrators. Implementation of regional certification and portable pension systems may also contribute to successful recruitment efforts.

2. Expand existing efforts to encourage women and minorities to apply for administrative positions.

Professional Associations
State Departments Of Education
Higher Education
NESDEC

Several organizations publish lists of administrative openings, hold workshops for aspiring administrators, sponsor network-building activities and help with resume writing and interviewing techniques. Some state organizations sponsor special conferences for aspiring women administrators. Others are considering mentoring systems tailored to the particular issues and needs of women and minorities. Additional efforts beyond providing information and encouragement may be necessary. Measuring the increased number of women and minority candidates as well as linking candidates with potential employers or search consultants should prove helpful.

Support Issues

Survey responses revealed "lack of support" as a contributing factor in discouraging candidates. Administrators need appropriate and sufficient professional staff support in the central office. The lack of central office support and its detrimental effect on applicants for administrative positions was widely noted. Most agreed that superintendents are in a stressful position with a high demand for their services, high expectations for results, but decreasing resource support.

SYMPOSIUM RECOMMENDATION: *THAT School districts provide staff support commensurate with the needs and programs of the school district.*

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

IMPLEMENTORS:

1. Develop administrative organization models illustrating appropriate staffing levels for school districts grouped by size or type.

Professional Associations
State Departments of Education
Higher Education

Such models based on surveys of current practice would provide a reference point for school boards to discuss appropriate administrative staffing. Professional staff support is becoming increasingly important as the complexities of the role of superintendent broaden and efforts toward more accountability escalate. The concept of lost opportunity might prove useful in assessing what tasks are not performed in situations of administrative overload.

School boards should be aware of the not-so-subtle impact that an inappropriate central office staffing arrangement has on candidates during a search process. Increasingly, candidates want assurances that the availability of professional support staff will give them the time and resources required to carry out the tasks connected with the position. For both school boards and superintendent, freeing time for educational leadership makes sense.

2. Explore the management team concept, with team composition models appropriate for different types and sizes of school districts.

Professional Associations
Superintendents in District

Additional staff alone will only go part way to relieving the workload of top administrators. The management team concept provides for an effective and shared working relationship among staff which gives additional relief, reduces isolation and reconnects increasingly specialized staff.

3. Design collaborative ventures for small districts as a way of increasing support.

Superintendents in District
NESDEC

It is obviously difficult for small districts to develop a credible rationale for increased support. Yet most of the demands made on central administration in a large district are also made on administration in a small district. By pooling efforts, however, and dividing the labor, administration in small districts with limited staff support may accomplish as much as administration in large districts with adequate central office staff. Superintendents could meet regularly, decide common priorities, and divide the "extra" work. One may write proposals and another may

review literature on a topic of common interest. Some districts could pool funds to offer professional development or employ staff for specific projects, such as a coordinator of business-industry ventures or a consultant for a technology program. Assistance should be provided in designing these collaborative systems.

Training Issues

Survey respondents commented on the academic and professional education of prospective administrators. They felt that the content of academic and professional courses ought to be reflective of current administrative roles, including the acquisition and development of management and leadership skills appropriate for today's schools.

Symposium participants noted several recent national reports on administrative preparation and agreed that reform in pre-service administrative training is needed. Additionally, they stressed that opportunities for sabbaticals, seminars, and professional development be extended to practicing administrators as well.

SYMPOSIUM RECOMMENDATION FOR PRE-SERVICE: *THAT Preparation programs in educational administration be re-examined to determine if they are based on a current and accurate description of the administrative role and*
THAT At least one such preparation program, leading to a doctorate degree, be available in each state or through formal state collaborative programs.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

IMPLEMENTORS:

Higher Education
Superintendents in District

1. Review preparation programs in educational administration for relevancy.

Programs designed for the preparation of educational administrators within colleges and universities should adhere to the guidelines in the Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration. The report, published by the University Council on Educational Administration, directs recommendations to presidents, deans, department chairs and professors.

A key recommendation of the report was the establishment of a National

Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPB). A major purpose of the NPB is to develop, disseminate, and implement professional models for the preparation and in-service training of educational leaders.

The report also acknowledges the need to base the application of knowledge and skills in a clinical rather than a purely academic setting. It thus provides support for the implementation of simulation techniques and programs offering a practicum, internship and formal mentoring.

Given fund restrictions as well as course enrollments, many administration courses remain generic in nature. This problem might be addressed in part by exchanging college professors and school district administrators on some timely basis, or by establishing *chairs* for superintendents to teach as adjunct faculty or on a part-time basis.

2. Provide access to advanced degree programs in each state.

Higher Education
NESDEC
Superintendents in District
Professional Associations

In states where a doctoral program is not offered or where geographic access to one or more existing programs is not feasible, there should be formal ties established with an institution offering the doctorate degree. Graduate students might begin their program knowing in advance that courses would be credited toward a doctoral degree program if they choose to pursue it later. There should also be some assurance extended to successful graduate students that their admission to the degree program would be guaranteed upon formal application at a later date.

There should be reciprocal agreements established among colleges and universities which would allow transfer at the advanced graduate level from one institution to another institution granting the doctoral degree. Such an arrangement would allow working administrators and prospective administrators to complete part of the doctoral program at locations more convenient to their place of employment.

3. Teacher pre-service programs should include some exposure to school administration.

Higher Education
State Departments of Education

Administrative coursework at the pre-service level would at least introduce prospective teachers to the roles and functions of school administrators and perhaps encourage some to consider administration as part of their career path. It might also provide some background for more effective participation in teacher empowerment initiatives in the districts in which they become employed.

SYMPOSIUM RECOMMENDATION FOR IN-SERVICE: THAT *A variety of development programs be provided to practicing superintendents.*

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

IMPLEMENTORS:

1. Explore alternative development and growth opportunities for superintendents.

State Departments of Education
Professional Associations
Higher Education
NESDEC

In addition to self-motivated or school board required or encouraged development programs for superintendents, states are considering and some are implementing renewal requirements for a continuing certificate as opposed to life time certification. Such requirements should produce alternative development opportunities, such as paid sabbaticals, assessment and development programs, special or theme-oriented institutes and intensive training workshops. The content of such programs would provide for information update, skill acquisition, and the application of new knowledge.

2. Formalize efforts for orientation, consultation, or direct assistance to new superintendents.

State Departments Of Education
NESDEC
Professional Associations
Higher Education

New superintendents and principals are expected to be fully skilled and self-sufficient. However, administrators new to a particular state as well as those new to administration have orientation needs. Their varying needs should be assessed and current state and regional orientation efforts modified through more responsive approaches.

Other possible resources could include a listing of superintendents who could give peer support and/or "trouble-shoot" with categories of their expertise. State departments could provide periodic updates on regulatory matters and new services and programs. Higher education could develop networks of graduates in educational administration.

3. Provide more awards and peer recognition for superintendents.

Professional Associations
Higher Education

Some states already have appropriate recognition practices in place that could be reviewed by others. Rewards or recognition could be provided for new or experienced administrators, for special achievements and for exemplary programs by type of district, such as urban, rural or suburban.

4. Develop or expand mentoring programs as a support system and as one aspect of professional development.

Professional Associations
State Departments of Education

There is a need for formal mentoring programs for new administrators as well as for those in training or aspiring to be administrators. These might be established through professional organizations and higher education working together.

Regional And National Cooperation Issues

In response to the national call for reforms in education, states have moved toward increased certification requirements for school administrators resulting in more prescriptive forms of administrative certification or licensing. The effect of these measures, survey respondents pointed out, has been to limit the reciprocal recognition of administrative certification from state to state, as well as make more difficult the movement of teachers to administrative positions within their own states.

Respondents noted also that state retirement systems limit the number of years that an incoming administrator may transfer into the system. This limitation and attendant restrictions in the *portability* of accumulated retirement discourage experienced administrators from moving to positions in other states.

SYMPOSIUM RECOMMENDATION: THAT *Efforts currently underway for reciprocity of certification and portability of pensions be supported and expanded to meet anticipated staffing demands.*

CERTIFICATION: IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

IMPLEMENTORS:

1. Broaden the review and modification of standards to develop a more common base for certification.

Professional Associations
State Departments of Education
The Regional Lab

Current efforts by The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands and the chief state school officers in New England and New York to develop a provisional regional certificate, while laudatory and encouraging, should be viewed as a first step. Work toward a regional certificate and participation in reciprocal agreements should follow the current efforts.

2. Provide more flexible approaches and alternative routes for obtaining certification when appropriate.

Professional Associations
State Departments of Education

Normal certification routes are pursued by most holders of administrative certificates. However, when applicants from another state have been successful administrators or when a non-traditional but suitable academic program has been pursued, there ought to be a provision to waive certain requirements such as coursework, internships or testing.

When testing is dependent on a national schedule which may not coincide with job opportunities, a disincentive is added to the process of attracting candidates. Without questioning test appropriateness, some

argue that the states should focus more on approval of preparation programs and less on the testing of professionals.

RETIREMENT: IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

IMPLEMENTORS:

Professional Associations

1. Work toward providing a portable retirement system to permit greater mobility of candidates from one state to another.

One possibility is a roll-over to a national pool, modeled on TIAA-CREF. Another is the notion of pension fund transfer from one state to another. The feasibility of such systems is currently being explored by the National Governors' Association.

Public Information Issues

The only public information item mentioned by survey respondents, ineffective district advertizing for vacancies, was not ranked as an important factor. Symposium participants, however, felt that the general public is not fully aware of the critical importance that administrators have in the educational process. Not enough public attention has been paid to the impact that creative and talented administrators and school board members make on the quality of education in the school district. Moreover, they cited a lack of information about the declining quality and quantity of administrator pools and candidates for school board positions.

SYMPOSIUM RECOMMENDATION: THAT *Broad-based information campaigns be planned with professional assistance to develop greater understanding among all audiences for the roles of school administrators and school board members.*

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

IMPLEMENTORS:

Professional Associations
Superintendents in District
State Departments of Education
Higher Education
NESDEC

1. Create more public awareness of the roles of administrators.

The responsibilities of various administrative positions, including superintendent, central office administrator, principal, special education director and business manager, need to be brought to the attention of community leaders and the public at large. In any media release related to educational events, the contributing roles of various administrators should be carefully noted. Administrators should be identified in roles evidencing educational leadership.

2. Create more positive awareness of school board roles to attract a broader array of candidates for board vacancies.

Professional Associations
Superintendents in District
State Departments of Education
School Boards

Many school boards are voicing a need for more interest on the part of citizens to serve on school boards. Various strategies are being attempted to bring this about. For instance, in one state a cooperative venture between business/industry and school boards promotes to citizens the value of becoming school board candidates. Another state holds training for prospective board members entitled "So You Want to Run for School Board."

A Final Word

The purpose of this report has been to document a shortage of administrators within New England and to advance recommendations aimed at alleviating that shortage. Two points are clear. The shortage has not been brought about by a simple action or has no single cause. Similarly, the remedy is multi-faceted and involves the cooperation of many.

The same issue from a different perspective is one of instructional leadership. While restructuring and other reform efforts focus on teacher empowerment, the role of administrative leadership must not be omitted. This report attempts to outline the tasks necessary to provide high quality leadership to the schools and school systems of the 21st Century.

APPENDIX

Survey Factors Ranked in Descending Order

Factor *	Percentage of Population Who Cited the Factor	Percentage of Population Who Ranked a Factor from 1-10	Percentage of Population Who Ranked Factor 1-2-3 1= Most Important
Salary	83%	79%	54%
High level of aggravation	74%	69%	32%
Large number of school boards	67%	62%	22%
Poor performance incentives	61%	56%	20%
Lack of job satisfaction	55%	50%	25%
High housing costs	52%	47%	13%
Administrator retirement coupled with lower teacher interest in administration	51%	45%	12%
Difficulties with school boards	48%	43%	11%
Lack of geographic mobility	47%	44%	17%
Lack of community support	47%	44%	7%
Inadequate professional support system	44%	41%	10%
Inadequate central office staff	44%	38%	8%
Low district budgets	38%	32%	10%
Lack of women applicants	33%	28%	5%
Non-transferrable retirement system	30%	26%	2%
Poor management skills	27%	26%	6%
Problems with certification	25%	21%	1%
Early retirement	24%	19%	5%
Lack of internal promotion mechanisms	23%	20%	4%
Ineffective pre-service preparation	19%	18%	8%
Poor applicant job-seeking skills	6%	6%	2%
Ineffective district advertising	4%	2%	0%

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